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Dear Parents /Caregivers:

Re: Update on the 2012-2013 Toronto Outbreak Season

The 2012-2013 influenza (flu) season is upon us. Influenza has hit early with a large number of lab-confirmed cases reported to Toronto Public Health. A number of other viruses that cause coughs and colds are also circulating in Toronto. In addition, norovirus, a common cause of vomiting and diarrhea, is also being seen in Toronto.

There are a number of steps you and your family can take to help prevent the spread of influenza, other viruses that cause coughs and colds, and viruses that cause vomiting and diarrhea, such as norovirus. These include:

- **Get your flu shot:** Influenza immunization is the most effective way to prevent influenza illness.
- **Clean your hands:** Clean hands frequently using alcohol-based hand rubs (with a minimum of 70% alcohol). If hands are visibly dirty, they should be cleaned with soap and water.
- **Cover your cough:** Use a tissue or cough/sneeze into your sleeve.
- **Anyone who becomes ill should stay home from work or school.**

For more information about seasonal influenza and the flu vaccine, please visit the Toronto Public Health website at: http://www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/factsheets/influenza_factsheet.htm.

For more information about norovirus, please visit:
http://www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/factsheets/pdf/fs_norovirus.pdf

If you have additional questions please contact **Toronto Health Connection (416-338-7600)**.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara Yaffe
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